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ABSTRACT

This document is a packet of information for art teachers about the Gorgeous Mosaic, a project being carried out by the classroom art teachers of the world in which students individually draw portraits of the many different types of youngsters there are in their world on small cardboard tiles. The completed tiles are mounted on panels for exhibition. An introductory section describes the project and its background. The next section gives numbers of participating students so far (over 500,000 students as of 1990), measurements for the tiles and notes on logistics of material procurement, ways of keeping records of participants, and coordinating exhibits. A key section provides a guide to the lesson in which students make the tiles for the mosaic. Lesson components include the following: (1) motivation (a discussion of the concept and the ideas behind it); (2) a presentation of the method for making the tiles and creating the mosaic; (3) materials; and (4) tips on customizing the lesson. A concluding note discusses the importance of making the students understand the necessity of producing work that is appropriate and on target. Appended are a photocopy of a newspaper article on the project with two photographs, a project fact sheet, and a photocopy of a medieval mosaic. (JB)

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THE GORGEOUS MOSAIC℠

A WORK OF ART
BY THE SCHOOLCHILDREN OF THE WORLD

TEACHER'S PACKET

Mark Gura

CG 028 759

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The Gorgeous Mosaic℠ Project
Teacher's Packet

by Mark Gura

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THE GORGEOUS MOSAIC

Background

New York City's Mayor Dinkins has likened the city to "a gorgeous mosaic". This poetic term is a description of the beautiful weaving of the city's awsome ethnic and cultural diversity into an exquisite tapestry. The splendor of the mosaic's design as a whole outshines that of any of it's indivdual threads. This metaphor further serves as a vision that points the way to a world in which all people appreciate the special qualities of their neighbors and join with them to form a harmonious family of man. The Gorgeous Mosaic is a portrait of this family.

The project represents an opportunity for the schoolchildren of the world in partnership with the world's art educators to bring this poetic image to life. In creating this mosaic the students will become a perfect example of the vision. Such a work of art can only be created with the participation of a great many and only then if they are willing to work past the personal and societal prejudices that are threatening the future our world. The execution of the mosaic will be the perfect object lesson in tolerance and cooperation.

Description of the Project

The project is being carried out by the classroom Art Teachers of the world. They introduce the project to their classes who in turn make the multitude of tiles (portraits) needed (see Numbers and Measurements). The students individually draw portraits of the many different types of youngsters there are in their world on small (2"square) cardboard tiles.

The completed tiles are mounted on cardboard panels for exibition **(see instructions in the Gorgeous Mosaic Coordinator's Packet)**. In areas where individual schools are partipating, these schools mount their own work and exhibit it themselves. In other areas where numbers of schools participate on the project in a coordinated effort, the completed tiles may be mounted either by the individual schools or by some assigned group that does the mounting for the entire area as was done in New York City for the exhibition of the project's first year's work, currently on view at the Children's Museum of Manhattan.

The Children's Atelier, the organization coordinating The Gorgeous Mosaic Project, will continue to receive completed panels from local Gorgeous Mosaic participation around the world, to assemble a global Gorgeous Mosaic Exhibition. The Children's Atelier invites all groups participating in the project to send a few panels for inclusion in the exhibition. Please send some documentation of your group in the process of working on the project as well, as this will also comprise part of the exhibit. Photos, news clippings, video tapes etc. would be useful

Numbers and Measurements

Each student produces **several** 2" square tiles. So far over 500,000 students have participated in the project and the resultant exhibitions have been fantastic. The power of unity is very well expressed by this project.
The ultimate goal of the Gorgeous Mosaic Project is to have every youngster in the world participate. We expect to include the work of over a million student's in the upcoming first global exhibition of The Gorgeous Mosaic.

Logistics

Cardboard for the tiles can be purchased inexpensively at about 70 cents per sheet (white 6 ply poster board also called railroad board . each sheet is 22" x 28"). This material is easy to find and is available at most art supply stores. If you are unable to find it in your area you may substite any heavy white card stock. The teacher is to carefully cut the material into tiles that are 2"square.

Please keep a record of the students who participate. Panels sent to The Children's Atelier for inclusion in the global exhibit should be accompanied by a list of the students whose work is on the panels.

Participating teachers will be notified by mail of the date and location of the exhibition. Teachers are requested to provide some sort of personal aknowledgment for each student who participates (certificate, button, card etc.) and will be kept informed about

exhibitions and media coverage so that this can be passed on to the students. The names of the schools that partipate will be shown at the exhition.

The Lesson

Motivation

Announce to the students that they are about to participate in creating the Gorgeous Mosaic, an important project in which they will join many other youngsters in a mass effort. Explain to them that unlike most art which is a personal effort, that this project is different because it is so big and special and that only a great many young people can make it work! Tell them that the mosaic will be huge and beautiful when it is finished and that it will be exhibited so that people will come to look at their work.

Initiate a discussion with the students about the concept of mosaic work by asking them if they know what a mosaic is. Show them examples of mosaics (see enclosure).

Explain to the students that New York City's Mayor Dinkins has called his city "a gorgeous mosaic". Ask them if they understand what he means by this. Make sure they understand the simile of the different ethnic groups as tiles comprising a mosaic as a whole. Explain to the students that in a mosaic, while the picture is made up of many, many different, very pretty tiles, the whole picture is far more magnificient in it's totality than any individual piece. Explain to them that this is true for "the gorgeous mosaic" too, that the world is made up of many different and wonderful types of people and that when they are seen together as a group, this group is more magnificent than any of it's individual members.

Explain to the students that each one of them will have the opportunity to create several tiles which will be put together with the multsitudes of other tiles created by many other yougsters to form the mosaic (show them the cover to further illustrate).

Tell the students that they should think about the many different types of youngsters in the world. Ask them to imagine how nice it would be if all these different types of young people could be friends. Solicit a response from the group by asking them to share what they think this would be like. Point out to them that they will be making the vision come to life in two ways. One, by working together they will set a good example for everyone and two, they will be making a picture that shows how beautiful it is when all the different types of youg people exist together in harmony. Further point out that while the adults in the world are having trouble getting along together that this is an opportunity for the kids to do something that the adults can't do. They will be teaching the adults.

Method

After the class discussion distribute to each student a tile. Tell them that they are to fill the space of the tile with a picture of a youngster. Tell them that we will need many, many tiles that show the many different types of kids in the world. Tell them that they may do their tiles any way they like but explain to them that in order for their work to be seen and appreciated by the audience which will look at the finished mosaic, that they will have to make good use of the small space within each tile (you may wish to draw on the chalkboard examples of a good use and poor use of space).

Explain to the students that it is a good idea to start out by working lightly and experimentally (light pencil is a good begining material) and that as their work begins to take shape they can begin to darken it (going over the satisfactory pencil lines with a ball point pen works well for this). After the line drawing is completed explain to the students that this is a good time to add all the color they want (markers are perfect for this).

At this point it would be useful to have a short discussion with the students about the background in their work. You may wish to sketch some illustrations on the board as you explain to them that given the small format and the whiteness of the ground, to have a

strong impact, an artist would probably want to utilize the *background* in the tile to "work with" the subject.

Tell the students that they may do as many tiles as they like and that you will supply them with more material as they finish.

As the students finish have them fit their work together on a table top so that they can begin to enjoy the group process aspect of this project. This will be very exciting and satisfying to the students and will continue providing them with increased motivation as the work progresses.

Materials

2"square cardboard tiles, pencils(with erasers), ball point pens, markers* (we are using 6 ply poster board for the tiles, available at art supply stores at about 70 cents a sheet. Each sheet yields more that 150 2" tiles)

*In order for the completed piece (including hundreds of thousands of tiles) to work, certain design restrictions must be imposed or the resultant work will understandably be quite chaotic. For this reason we request that teachers use only the above listed materials. Work done in larger format or with other materials (including crayon, glitter, and 3D relief elements) may be of terrfic quality but will probably not mix well with the work done by other classes! The materials listed are also the most commonly available and few teachers should have problems securing them.

Customizing the lesson

The above lesson is intended to be used as is or to serve as a model for the individual teacher to customize as he or she sees fit. So long as the underlying spirit of the lesson is maintained and the activity results in the production of tiles which will be incorporated into the finished "piece", teachers may present the project to their classes in whatever way they feel is appropriate.

A project with the scope of The Gorgeous Mosaic lends itself to being extended in many ways. Teachers may wish to utilize this project as

a convenient way to begin the exploration of other areas such as portraiture, modular design, mosaic art, mural art, collective artwork etc. etc. Unfortunately space does not permit elaboration.

*APPROPRIATE TILES

Teachers: please discuss with your students the necessity of producing work that is appropriate and on target. This is always an important issue in making art for exhibition and is also a good lesson in life.

The design concept we are working with in this project is for students to produce pictures of the different types of kids who live in the world. There is a a specific format and set of materials to be used in doing the project. Keeping within the design parameters there is still plenty of room for creativity and individuality. However tiles that are obviously off the topic, bizarre, have written messages or the artist's signatures, are done in different formats or with different materials may ***not*** be included in the final piece. Please explain to your students that Bart Simpson, Bat Man, and Mickey Mouse are fine but really have no place in ***this*** project!

Thanks for your participation

Mark Gura
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Kids united in art

TO PROVE MAYOR DINkins' statement that we are all part of a "gorgeous mosaic," school children of all races, colors and creeds have been working on "The Gorgeous Mosaic" project for more than a year. Using pencil, ballpoint pens and colored markers, students in New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo and Washington drew the faces of their friends and neighbors on 2-inch squares of posterboard that were later assembled on panels.

In the process, the youngsters got a living lesson in togetherness, racial harmony and cooperation. Now the panels — each holding about 250 of the 2-inch squares — have been put together into a "tapestry" measuring more than 200 feet long and 10 feet high that can be seen, through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., at the Art Students League, 215 W. 57th St. During the summer, the Children's Museum of Manhattan will be showing approximately one-quarter of the panels.

The mosiac project has also evolved. More states, China and South America have joined in the multi-cultural art.

— Mila Andre

DETAIL from mosaic now on view

ED MOLINARI DAILY NEWS

Gorgeous Mosaic assembly line

ANDY FELDMAN

Students at the East Harlem School of the Performing Arts, Manhattan, who helped assemble more than 100,000 two-inch portraits created by city students into the Gorgeous Mosaic, take a break with art teacher Mark Gura to show off some of the 40-by 30-inch panels completed so far. The 100-by 10-foot mosaic was exhibited in the Gallery of the Art Students League of New York in early June. The project was coordinated by The Children's Atelier and the New York City Art Teachers Association/UFT.

"The Gorgeous Mosaic expresses our children's view of themselves as part of a dynamic global neighborhood. Our challenge in education today is to make that neighborhood all that it can be."

Lamar Alexander
U.S. Secretary of Education

FACT SHEET

* The Gorgeous Mosaic Project began in the spring of 1990 in just one classroom. Since then more than 500,000 students of all ages have participated.The project has been done in New York City (and surrounding areas), Philadelphia, Buffalo, San Francisco, Miami, Des Moines and numerous other cities. These students are continuing their work on the mosaic and have been joined by others in places as far away as Asia and South America.

* The Mosaic in an "early" state (approx. 16'x8') was shown at the Metopolitan Hospital Center's (New York City) exhibition to celebrate the World Children's Summit September-October 1990.

* The Mosaic in a more advanced, expanded state (approx. 200'x10') was exhibited June 1991 at the Art Students League gallery on West 57th Street, New York City.

* The Gorgeous Mosaic was exhibited at the Citicorp/Citibank Community Gallery of The Children's Museum of Manhattan, New York City from June 1991-March 1992.

* The Gorgeous Mosaic is currently on exhibition at The Martin Luther King Jr. Library in Washington D.C.

*The Gorgeous Mosaic will be a featured part of the New York State Quincentenial Commision's agenda in an exhibition at the New York State Museum in Albany during the Spring of 1992

* The Gorgeous Mosaic Project has the enthusiastic support of U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alxander, New York State Governor Mario Cuomo, New York City Mayor David Dinkins as well as other public officials.

* The Gorgeous Mosaic Project has been covered on numerous occasions by both print and broadcast media including The New York Daily News and the CBS Good Morning Show.